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Once dubbed

# 'AMERICA'S BLACKEST CHILD'



Justice Clarence Thomas, wife Ginni Thomas



Holy Cross

## Self-hating Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas hates Black people

Thomas' unusually intense self-hatred effects his decisions when they involve Black people, victims of his anti-blackness, p3



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# Right wing SCOTUS justices are not acting alone

By Rev. Jesse Jackson  
News Analysis

The right-wing gang of six justices on the Supreme Court just ruled that affirmative action in university admissions at Harvard and the University of North Carolina violates the Constitution. Do not be fooled. This ruling is not limited to the elite universities that seek to ensure diversity in their student bodies. It is not limited to education. The right-wing majority on the Court is escalating war on the reconstruction that was launched by the civil rights movement.

The court ruled that race is a suspect category even when used to remedy discrimination.

This ruling will be invoked to reverse efforts to guarantee equal employment opportunity, to provide opportunity for minority contractors, to counter discriminatory housing restrictions, to challenge hate crimes motivated by race. With this ruling, the Court declares that it is not only blind to the systemic racism that still scars this nation, but hostile to efforts to remedy that racism, arguing that they offend the Constitution. As Justice Katanji Brown Jackson wrote in her blistering dissent, "this is a tragedy for us all."

The decision of the gang of six, written by Chief Justice John Roberts, is only part of the Court's assault on equal rights under the law. Roberts also penned the court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* that gutted the Voting Rights Act — and has opened the gates to racially discriminatory election measures in dozens of states.

The right-wing justices are not acting alone. Across the country, an increasingly extremist Republican Party has made race-bait politics a centerpiece of its agenda. In Florida, for example, Gov. Ron

DeSantis, now a leading contender for the Republican presidential nomination, has outlawed teaching the truth about America's history of slavery. He has banned any diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. He is waging war on what he calls "woke" corporations that seek to defend equal rights under the law.

African Americans and Latinos are not the only target. The Civil Rights Reconstruction helped lay the groundwork for the expansion of rights for women, the LGBTQ community, the disabled, and the young. It is not accidental that the reactionary court majority now moves to overturn established law by terminating the right to abortion — and women's control of their bodies. On Friday, it also established — again against all precedent — a First Amendment right to discriminate in a case aimed at refusing service to gay couples. That surely will lead to cases that test the right to refuse service to Blacks or Asians or Latinos. This Supreme Court would take us back to the days when young African Americans could be arrested for seeking to be served at a lunch counter.

We've suffered this form of brutal racial reaction before. After the "Second Founding" — the passage of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments after the Civil War — this country began the first reconstruction, designed to ensure equal rights under the law to the newly liberated slaves.

That progress was met with fierce resistance from the plantation overlords that had profited from slave labor. The Ku Klux Klan unleashed a campaign of terror to smash the fusion coalitions that were beginning to grow, and to deprive Blacks of not only the vote but more generally of equal rights. Con-



servative justices on the Supreme Court embraced the new apartheid, ruling that "separate but equal" — in which the separation ensured that there was no equality — satisfied the Constitution. By the time they were finished, they had twisted the 14th Amendment designed to provide all with equal justice under the law to a corporate weapon against workers organizing to demand their rights in the workplace.

This Court's right-wing majority would take us back to the days when store owners could refuse to serve minorities, when women had no rights, when gay marriage was a sin and against the law.

They will not succeed. We aren't going back. They are tribunes of white privilege — cosseted by their circle of billionaires — standing against an increasingly diverse and proud people. They will not prevail — but only if people of conscience stand up, across lines of race, religion, region. The first Reconstruction led to a brutal reaction that imposed legal apartheid on this country for 100 years. We must not allow this new reaction to reverse our progress toward equal justice under the law

# Clarence Thomas hates Black people

By Julianne Malveaux

- As a child in Pinpoint, Georgia, Associate Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas was hazed by his classmates with the monicker "America's Blackest Child." Such hazing may have had long-term effects, rendering Thomas incapable of transcending his background. It may have given him an inferiority complex that expresses itself in his self-hatred, hatred of other Black people, and self-absorption.

While I'm no psychologist or psychiatrist, watching someone who used affirmative action to get into Yale Law School so vociferously attack the policy is fascinating. But, as Associate Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson noted in her dissent in the two Students for Fair Admissions (a misnomer if I ever saw one), Thomas has carried out a "prolonged attack" against affirmative action. His June opinion in Students for Fair Admissions was just one of his many attacks on affirmative action.

His distaste for affirmative action seems to stem from his own experiences at Yale, an experience that none of his classmates have verified. Thomas seemed to feel that white students assumed he was an affirmative action admit (he was) and thus not as capable as they were (there is no evidence of that). Thus he thinks affirmative action stigmatizes Black students, so the Supreme Court should eliminate it. Many of us who were affirmative action admits (I was) don't much chafe about any stigma. Instead, we celebrate the opportunities affirmative action offered, realizing that while affirmative action opened the door, it did not pass our comprehensive exams, our bar exams, or any other qualifiers. Affirmative action opened the door to some elite institutions, but it did not do the work to get us out.

Thomas has a way of making public policy personal. People look down on him, he thinks, and he is hurt and angry, just as he was when people called him America's Blackest Child. To make himself feel better, Thomas has surrounded himself with the wealthy elites of the Horatio Alger Society, which believes that hard work is all you need to get ahead in this country. Some of the hardest-working people I know are moms who receive public assistance, but Thomas and his ilk would look down on these folks and describe them as lazy (just as he did to his own sister during his confirmation hearings). In his narrow mind, he was looked down on. Thus, he must prove that he is "fair," "colorblind," and a proponent of "equal protection."

If there were fairness and equal protection under the law, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas wouldn't be sitting on the bench at all. Not only did he use affirmative action to get into Yale Law School, but he also used old-fashioned political patronage to get him on the bench. His patron, Senator



John Danforth (R-MO), aggressively championed his career, making sure he got plum assignments, including the chairmanship of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (where he once said that affirmative action made a difference in his life) and a judicial appointment that teed him up for the Supreme Court nomination. Several other, better-qualified Black jurists were far more qualified than he, but undoubtedly Senator Danforth put his thumb on the scale by embracing that nomination. Black America was ambivalent, but Thomas effectively used his "up from poverty" back story to convince folks like Dr. Maya Angelou that he would represent Black interests on the court. Instead, the New York Times described him, in 1992, as "the youngest and the cruelest" justice.

In the Supreme Court case *Hudson v. McMillan*, a Louisiana inmate, Keith Hudson, sued after Jack McMillan and other prison guards beat him so severely that they broke his dental plate while it was in his mouth. Seven of the nine justices agreed that the brutal and malicious beating was "cruel and unusual punishment," outlawed by the Eighth Amendment. Thomas, joined by Antonin Scalia, dissented from the majority, saying that the beating was not severe and that the Constitution did not protect prisoners. The facts of this case are jarring, especially as a supervisor witnessed McMillan and a colleague beating Hudson and told them "not to have too much fun." In his confirmation hearings, Thomas said he brought "something different" to the court, namely his empathy for the downtrodden. Instead, he brought an unusually intense self-hatred, which spills over to how he deals with cases involving Black people.

All Americans must deal with this self-hating justice, whose outdated opinions threaten civility, inclusion, and decency in our nation. Black America is significantly affected by his antiblackness. Hopefully, the Department of Justice will investigate Thomas' financial shenanigans and remove this depraved man from the Supreme Court.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is an economist, author, and Dean of the College of Ethnic Studies at Cal State LA. [juliannealveaux.com](http://juliannealveaux.com)

# Biden offers new plan after Supreme Court halts student debt cancellation

By Charlene Crowell(TriceEdneyWire.com)

- On June 30, a long-awaited and consequential Supreme Court decision denied forgiveness that would have erased \$430 billion of federal student loan balances for 20 million borrowers and lowered the median amount owed by another 23 million borrowers from \$29,400 to \$13,600.

Instead, the nation's highest court yielded to six states — Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and South Carolina — that had challenged the plan's legality. The decision also revealed stark differences within the court that will likely affect future decisions.

In his opinion for the 6-3 majority, Chief Justice John Roberts, referring to Education Secretary Miguel Cardona wrote: "The Secretary asserts that the HEROES Act grants him the authority to cancel \$430 billion of student loan principal. It does not... The question here is not whether something should be done; it is who has the authority to do it."

In a stark dissenting opinion, Associate Justice Elena Kagen re-

buked her colleagues and signaled future problematic decisions with the currently constituted court.

"After today," continued Justice Kagen, "no one will have to go back 50 years for the classic case of the Court manipulating standing doctrine, rather than obeying the edict to stay in its lane... Thus, the Court once again substitutes itself for Congress and the Executive Branch—and the hundreds of millions of people they represent—in making this Nation's most important, as well as most contested, policy decisions."

Reactions by consumer advocates and civil rights organizations were as swift as they were serious.

"The Supreme Court's decision to strike down the President's program is a clear disregard for what millions of Americans need — especially Black Americans," stated Derrick Johnson, CEO of the NAACP. "America has so easily forgiven greedy corporations for their debts — why would they refuse to provide the same grace and investment in our own students?"

"There is no time to wait—the Administration must act fast to deliver promised relief to worried



borrowers and prevent the federal government from sending bills Americans cannot afford to pay in September," stated Abby Shafroth, Co-Director of Advocacy with the National Consumer Law Center.

Concurring with these and other advocates, Jaylon Herbin, Director of Federal Campaigns at

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## America's ten 'Blackest' cities revealed

**These urban areas, where African Americans constitute a significant portion of the population, have become magnets for individuals seeking more substantial opportunities and sustainable living.**

**By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire**

A recent report by the esteemed Brookings Institution revealed that the internal migration patterns of African Americans in the United States have contributed to "black-majority cities."

These urban areas, where African Americans constitute a significant portion of the population, have become magnets for individuals seeking more substantial opportunities and sustainable living.

According to Insider Monkey, despite a mere 1.5% growth in their overall share since 1970, the African American community's strategic relocation has paved the way for their rising influence in critical regions nationwide.

Experts project that the United States will transform into a minority-white country by 2045, as racial minorities, including African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, are set to become the primary drivers of the country's economy.

Census experts attribute this transformation to two reasons: the combined racial minority population is projected to grow by a staggering 74% between 2018 and 2060, while the aging white population is expected to experience a decline during the same period.

Jackson, Mississippi, widely regarded as the "blackest city" in America, is at the forefront of this demographic shift.

With African Americans constituting over 80% of the city's

population, Jackson is a testament to the vitality and prominence of African American culture and influence.

Looking at the state level, Texas boasts the highest African American population, with 3.55 million individuals, followed closely by Georgia and Florida.

These three states rank as the top contenders with the highest concentrations of African Americans nationwide.

The following ten urban areas have the highest percentage of African American residents:

10. Miami Gardens, Florida Total Population: 110,881 African Americans: 68,121 Percentage: 61.44%
  9. Memphis, Tennessee Total Population: 628,118 African Americans: 398,824 Percentage: 63.50%
  8. Montgomery, Alabama Total Population: 198,659 African Americans: 126,268 Percentage: 63.56%
  7. Southfield, Michigan Total Population: 75,901 African Americans: 48,391 Percentage: 63.76%
  6. Birmingham, Alabama Total Population: 196,410 African Americans: 139,691 Percentage: 71.12%
  5. Albany, Georgia Total Population: 67,146 African Americans: 49,281 Percentage: 73.39%
  4. Detroit, Michigan Total Population: 632,589 African Americans: 484,779 Percentage: 76.63%
  3. Lauderdale, Florida Total Population: 73,461 African Americans: 58,704 Percentage: 79.91%
  2. East Orange, New Jersey Total Population: 68,893 African Americans: 55,087 Percentage: 79.96%
  1. Jackson, Mississippi Total Population: 149,813 African Americans: 122,612 Percentage: 81.84%
- Baltimore (Md.), Shreveport (La.), New Orleans, Mount Vernon (N.Y.), Macon (Ga.), Augusta (Ga.), Mobile (Ala.), Baton Rouge (La.), Portsmouth (Va.), Savannah (Ga.), Trenton (N.J.), Cleveland (Ohio), Hampton (Va.), and Newark (N.J.), rounded out the top 25 cities with the highest African American population.

## Man arrested with weapons in Obama's neighborhood streamed live after sharing Trump's post

**According to the memo, Taranto began live-streaming in the area shortly after resharing a social media post from Donald Trump, the Republican presidential candidate claimed to share Obama's address.**

**By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire**

Federal prosecutors revealed alarming details in a detention memo filed on Wednesday, July 5, regarding the arrest of Taylor Taranto, a man apprehended last week in former President Barack Obama's Washington, D.C., neighborhood.

According to the memo, Taranto began live-streaming in the area shortly after resharing a social media post from Donald Trump, the Republican presidential candidate claimed to share Obama's address.

The prosecutors urged a federal magistrate judge in the D.C. District Court to keep Taranto detained pending his trial for charges related to the January 6, 2021, U.S. Capitol attack.

In the filing, prosecutors noted that Taranto not only possessed weapons but also made threats against House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Maryland Democratic Rep. Jamie Raskin.

In June, Taranto and several others entered an elementary school near Raskin's home.

The disturbing incident was live-streamed by Taranto, who documented the group's actions, such as wandering around the school, entering the gymnasium, and projecting a film related to the events of January 6.

The court filing revealed Taranto's motive behind targeting the elementary school, stating that

its proximity to Raskin's residence influenced his choice.

Taranto expressed his intention to send a "shockwave" to Raskin, whom he perceived as harboring animosity towards supporters of former President Trump.

The memo quoted Taranto, who stated, "he's one of the guys that hates January 6 people, or more like Trump supporters, and it's kind of like sending a shockwave through him because I did nothing wrong, and he's probably freaking out and saying s\*\*\* like, 'Well he's stalking me.'"

Moreover, Taranto explicitly mentioned the location of the school, Piney Branch Elementary School in Maryland, which is adjacent to Raskin's residence.

Prosecutors emphasized the immediate and severe threat Taranto posed to the public.

They argued that his words and actions demonstrated his potential danger to multiple political figures and the general public.

Further, they urged the judge to consider the high-risk Taranto would pose if released, warning of potentially catastrophic consequences.

Taranto, already subject to an open warrant related to the January 6 riot charges, was apprehended last week in Obama's neighborhood while possessing firearms.

The day before his arrest, Taranto claimed on a livestream that he possessed a detonator.

On June 28, prosecutors stated that Taranto made "ominous comments" on video targeting McCarthy, proclaiming, "Coming at you, McCarthy. Can't stop what's coming. Nothing can stop what's coming."

After witnessing these threatening remarks, law enforcement authorities attempted to locate Taranto but were unsuccessful.

The following day, on June 29, Trump allegedly shared what he

claimed to be Obama's address on the social media platform Truth Social.

Taranto, using his own Truth Social account, reposted the address. Taranto further declared, "We got these losers surrounded! See you in hell, Podesta's and Obama's."

Shortly after, Taranto resumed live streaming from his YouTube channel while driving through Washington D.C.'s Kalorama neighborhood.

According to the government's filing, Taranto parked his van and walked around the residential area.

Due to the restricted nature of the neighborhood, United States Secret Service officers began monitoring Taranto almost immediately upon his arrival and initiation of filming.

Prosecutors highlighted Taranto's repeated claims that his actions were protected by free speech as if uttering the words "First Amendment" absolved him of trespassing.

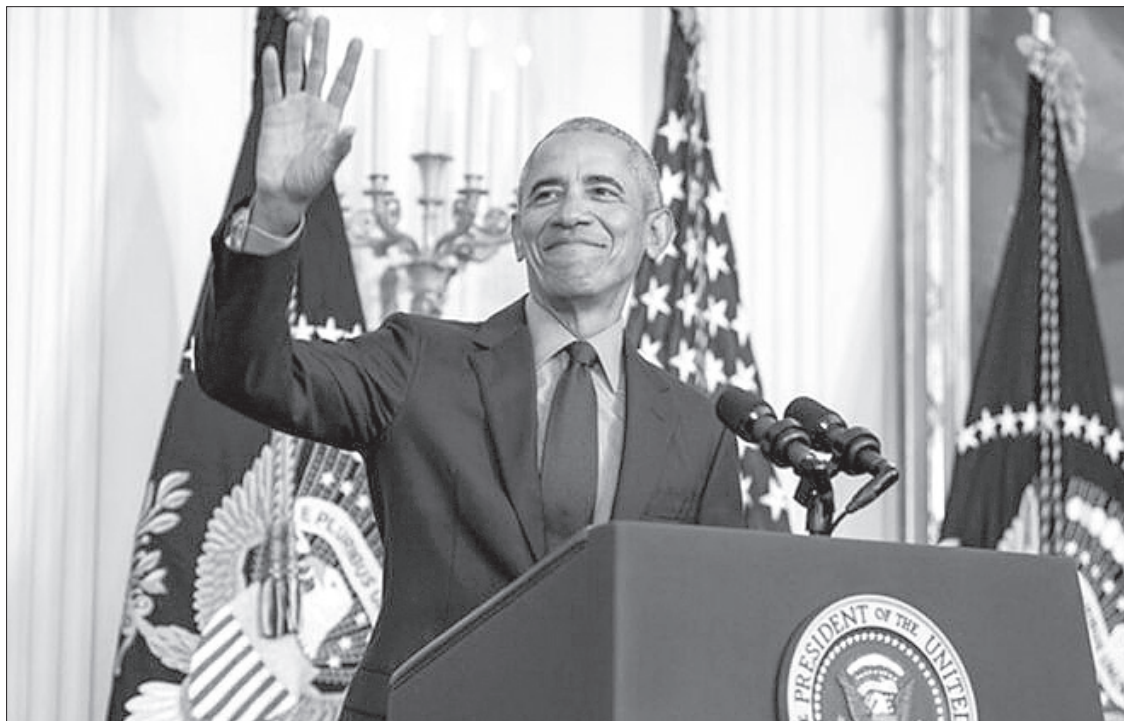
The detention memo quoted Taranto's remarks captured in his recording: "So yeah, more than likely, these guys also all hang for treason. See how I said that? You gotta be very safe and careful. Someone warned me."

As Secret Service agents approached Taranto while veering off the street into a wooded area, he attempted to flee but was swiftly apprehended and arrested.

In their filing, prosecutors disclosed that two firearms, a "Smith and Wesson M&P Shield" and a "Ceska 9mm C.Z. Scorpion E3," were discovered in Taranto's van during his arrest.

Additionally, they found numerous rounds of nine-millimeter ammunition, a steering wheel lock, a machete, signs, a mattress, and other items indicating that Taranto had been residing in the van.

While over a dozen other firearms are registered to Taranto, authorities said they have yet to locate them.



# Woke

## Striving for diversity without affirmative action

By Joshua Heron  
(Howard U newsservice)

Advocacy groups chant outside U.S. Supreme Court in October as justices hear arguments in affirmative action cases that could affect university admissions. (Photo: Corinne

Education officials, civil rights leaders, employers and students are debating the implications of the U.S. Supreme Court's stance on affirmative action, which is forcing colleges and universities to brainstorm and implement new policies that ensure racial diversity on campus is consistent.

Janai Nelson, president and director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, reminded students and admissions officers that the Black story still matters and that diversity on college campuses is not an afterthought.

"While we are all disheartened and dismayed by this decision, we are also clear about the mandate we'll have before us," Nelson said. "And that is not to abandon the project of diversity, but to double down on it because that is what our democracy requires."

"The court said nothing in today's opinion about a student or applicant not using their race as part of their admission submissions to explain their lived experience and to talk about how it has impacted their lives," Nelson said during a press conference held by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, following the courts' decision on Thursday.

In a 6-3 vote, the Supreme Court deemed race-based affirmative action unlawful, prohibiting colleges and universities from considering race as a factor in the admissions process.

In October, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*. In 2014, conservative activist Edward Blum sued Harvard University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill over their use of race-conscious admissions.

Armando Gimenez believes race played a factor in his acceptance to Columbia University based on the

demographics of the Ivy League school in New York City.

"I would like to believe that I would have still been admitted to Columbia if they did not consider my race, but I cannot deny the facts," Gimenez, a first-year student, said.

"Looking at the demographics and my fellow peers I believe race played a large role in my admittance, and I may have not been admitted if not for the consideration."

The Supreme Court's ruling affects not only predominantly white institutions like Columbia, but also HBCUs.

Howard University President Wayne A.I. Frederick fears the ruling will create an immense burden on HBCUs in terms of enrollment — one too cumbersome to carry. He revealed those fears on CNN following the breaking news.

"Historically Black colleges and universities are carrying an outsized burden to diversify so many industries in America. We represent only 3% of the higher [education] institutions, but we are responsible for 25% of the bachelor's degrees," Frederick said.

"By not allowing race to be considered in admissions elsewhere, you can put an even more outsized burden on historically Black colleges and universities who don't have the capacity to carry that type of a burden."

According to a Best Colleges study, "an overwhelming majority of college students believe racial/ethnic diversity improves the social experience (62%) and learning environment (59%) of schools."

However, the study also reveals that one-third of Black students are actually against affirmative action. More students from racial and ethnic groups than white students "report negative impacts of race-conscious college admissions."

Though its intent may be to create opportunities, its impact, according to some Black students, has not been the best. Jerry Charleston, a recent graduate of the University of North Carolina, agrees to an extent, but believes affirmative action hasn't been around long enough to access its impact.

"Although affirmative action has been extremely beneficial for the minority groups that it applies to, it has also had some issues in its productiv-



ity for these groups," Charleston said.

Charleston does believe affirmative action's intent to provide equal opportunity will not be reached because of the court's decision.

"The problem now, I believe, is that it is being repealed severely prematurely before its effects can really be seen universally among all groups of people."

"An even bigger issue is that it is starting with two schools that are historically 'white legacy' schools," Charleston said. "It has only been around since the '60s which is on average two to three familial generations of people who would actually experience the effects. That isn't long enough to create a legacy within an institution or business. I don't believe it has actually been around long enough to produce lasting effects or changes to overwrite a longer history of inequalities in education and occupation."

Chief Justice John Roberts condemned Harvard University and the University of North Carolina in the conservative majority opinion.

"The Harvard and UNC admissions programs cannot be reconciled with the guarantees of the Equal Protection Clause [14th amendment]," Roberts said. "Both programs lack sufficiently focused and measurable objectives warranting the use of race, unavoidably employ race in a negative manner, involve racial stereotyping and lack meaningful endpoints. We have never permitted admissions programs to work in that way, and we will not do so today."

The three justices who voted in favor of affirmative action included

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan. Jackson and Sotomayor wrote fierce dissent opinions in response to the conservative majority.

"The best that can be said of the majority's perspective is that it proceeds (ostrich-like) from the hope that preventing consideration of race will end racism," Jackson said. "But if that is its motivation, the majority proceeds in vain. If the colleges of this country are required to ignore a thing that matters, it will not just go away. It will take longer for racism to leave us. And, ultimately, ignoring race just makes it matter more."

Sotomayor added, "today, this Court stands in the way and rolls back decades of precedent and momentous progress."

Sotomayor defended her claims with statistics from University of California, Berkeley. California was the first state to ban affirmative action at public universities.

"At the University of California, Berkeley, a top public university not just in California but also nationally, the percentage of Black students in the freshman class dropped from 6.32% in 1995 to 3.37% in 1998," Sotomayor said.

The decline in diversity now seems inevitable, observers say.

Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce examined the success probability of six admission models. "When it comes to the goal of equalizing college opportunity across advantaged and disadvantaged racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups, there is no good substitute for the consideration of race," the center

reported.

Following the court's decision, Howard University released a statement warning of a ripple effect across the country.

"The decision will not only have a devastating impact on the diversity of colleges and universities across the country, but will also decrease access to higher education for students of color everywhere," the university said. "Education is still a top driver of economic success for all Americans, and this decision will have far-reaching ramifications for those seeking equity in the college admissions process and beyond."

Charleston said he would have applied to an HBCU if race-based affirmative action had been removed during his college application season.

"If my race, ethnicity or specific background is viewed as a hindrance by reviewers when processing an application, then I would rather attend a school that would accept the potential benefits and drawbacks experienced from a certain upbringing and see that the accomplishments of what I or any other minority are capable of are worth investing in to see growth, such as an HBCU dedicated to that very thing," the recent UNC graduate said.

Gimenez said his decision to apply to an Ivy League school would have remained the same if race was not a factor on his application; however, his pool of HBCU schools would have expanded.

"If affirmative action was illegal, it would not have stopped my pursuits for an Ivy League college and Columbia. I would have applied to more HBCUs and put more consideration into my environment and peers."

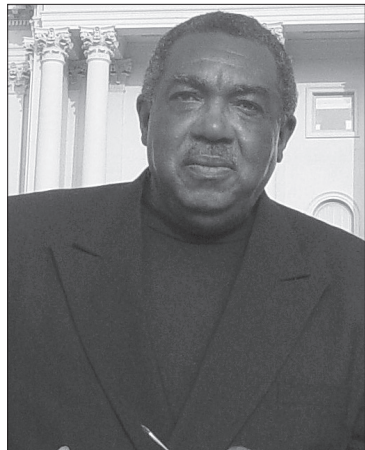
Proponents of affirmative action say the burden falls back on the Black race — the Black race that shouldn't be considered when education is at stake. However, they point out, race had a role in what water fountain one drank from, how long one went to jail because of crack-cocaine disparities and whether a hoodie deems one worthy of death.

So much, they say, for "post-racial" America.

Joshua Heron is a recent graduate of Howard University and reporter for HUNewsServie.com. He will be pursuing a master's degree at Arizona State University in the fall.

## U.S. Supreme Court has never been a defender of racial justice

By A. Peter Bailey (Trice  
EdneyWire.com)



Coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court's affirmative action decision in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* would lead their readers to believe this was a monumental decision that reflected some type of brand-new position in this country.

Each of the "big-boy" newspapers headlined their reaction across the top of their June 30, 2023 issues. "JUSTICES GUT COLLEGE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION," shouted *The New York Times*; "Court Guts College Affirmative Action," heralded *The Wall Street Journal*; "JUSTICES RULE AGAINST AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN COLLEGES," screamed *The Washington Post*.

Their editorials also presented the decision as though it was something of immense historic importance. *The New York Times* noted that "The Decades-Long Fight to Dismantle Affirmative Action;" *The Wall Street Journal* praised the court's decision as "A Landmark For Racial Equality;" *The Washington Post* insisted that "Affirmative Action Gone. Campus Diversity Need Not Be."

When reading all of the above one would think that the Supreme Court's decision was shocking and unexpected. It may have been such for those Blacks and Whites who believe that the Court, when dealing with white supremacy in this country, has been and still is some kind of

objective and neutral branch of the federal government. Serious Black people and many white people in this country are well aware that the Court has always been a defender and promoter of white supremacy.

The only time during this country's history that the Supreme Court has made any decisions against violent and brutalizing white supremacy was during the Cold War with Russia. The Russians, like most people of European descent, believe in white supremacy. However, they took every opportunity to greatly publicize overt manifestations of white supremacy in the United States. In response to the Russian propaganda, the Supreme Court had to make at least

some decisions that would enable the United States to continue to present themselves as the leader of the "Free World" and a place where all people have equal rights, equal justice and equal opportunity. That led to all of the Supreme Court's civil rights decisions since *Brown vs. Board* in 1954.

Anyone wanting to learn the real deal about the Supreme Court should read articles and books by great Black master teachers such as Brother Malcolm X, Brother Lerone Bennett, Jr, Brother Martin Luther King, Jr, Brother Harold Cruse, Sister Mary McLeod Bethune, Sister Fannie Lou Hamer, Sister Frances Cress Welsing and Sister C. DeLores Tucker.

# Editorial - Opinion

## On Independence Day: Thomas Jefferson, Clarence Thomas, a paradox of liberty



By David W. Marshall  
(TriceEdneyWire.com)

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened its permanent home in 2016 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Among the museum's many exhibitions is one that explored slavery and enslaved people in America through the lens of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello plantation. The exhibit, "Paradox of Liberty," highlights two critical elements in American history. The first is the paradox of the American Revolution—the fight for liberty in an era of pervasive slavery.

The second element is the self-contradiction of the man who was the primary author of the Dec-

laration of Independence. When we look at national unity from patriotic and moral lenses, it can best be described by the paradox of five powerful words authored by Thomas Jefferson: "All men are created equal." And yet Jefferson was an owner of slaves.

Jefferson was a complex man who was an oppressor (slave owner) while at the same time, he was oppressed by the British. He was a man who achieved a degree of freedom when the American colonies gained their independence from Great Britain. However, he chose not to extend independence and liberty to all his slaves when he denied their freedom after his death. There were over 600 enslaved men, women, and children during Jefferson's lifetime on his Virginia plantation. Jefferson would set only two of them free.

As the facts of Jefferson, the oppressor, are disheartening, he wrote those five powerful words from the perspective of being an oppressed citizen at the hands of King George III of England. As our nation celebrates Independence Day, we should remember that Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence to inform a "candid world" about the "long train of abuses" the American colonies were subject to the rule of King George III. It listed and explained,

in point-by-point detail, the "patient sufferance of the colonies," which justified their reasons for public protest. With an unsuspecting world being part of his written audience, Jefferson exposed the truth about the oppressor and the truth concerning the oppressed.

The anger, humiliation, and pain oppressed people must endure (then and now) were evident in his words. He understood the divine rights of kings is the belief that the right to rule comes directly from God and is not derived from the people. It is believed that kings are not answerable for their actions to the people whom they are led to govern. As the author of the Declaration of Independence, a disrespected Jefferson was focused on King George III, who saw himself as superior to everyone. In his "No Justice, No Peace" message to the world, he made it clear that despite one man's position as ruler and another as subject, in God's eyes, Thomas Jefferson and King George III were both created equal as human beings. In principle, he stressed that the divine rights of kings were wrong. Despite being an oppressor, our primary focus, in this case, should be on the everlasting contribution of Jefferson's written words rather than the hypocrisy of his immoral actions.

Jefferson's words spoke for all oppressed people throughout all eras of time. To those considered "others," he gave them fighting ammunition against men and women who considered themselves superior because of race, religion, class, level of education, gender, or for any unjust reason. Any type of injustice, unfairness, or social inequality cannot, in good faith, stand up against the moral weight of "All men are created equal." Jefferson's words were a deep commitment to human equality. They were ultimately used by future men and women to oppose slavery, justify the right of women to vote, end segregation, and fight income inequality. Despite Jefferson's understanding that oppressed people will always need to be vindicated, as an oppressor and slave owner, he reminds us how America started and remains a nation filled with shameless hypocrisy.

The Supreme Court's recent ruling in favor of striking down affirmative action and the consideration of race in college admissions is another example of self-contradiction, this time by Justice Clarence Thomas. While Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Ketanji Brown Jackson both benefitted from affirmative action, Justice Brown Jackson voted to up-

hold it, and Justice Thomas voted to strike it down. In the 1970s, Yale University followed an affirmative action policy to increase minority college admissions and achieve a goal of 10 percent minority enrollment. In 1971, Clarence Thomas was admitted to Yale's Law School as part of its affirmative action program.

Thomas later became chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, where he spoke of the importance of affirmative action. Thomas told fellow staffers at the EEOC that "God only knows where I would be today" if not for the legal principles of equal employment measures such as affirmative action that are critical to minorities and women in this society." Thomas continued, "These laws and their proper application are all that stand between the first 17 years of my life and the second 17 years." Both Jefferson and Thomas were self-centered men at times, but the contrast is clear. At least Thomas Jefferson gave future generations something to work with, while Clarence Thomas chose to take it away.

David W. Marshall is the founder of the faith-based organization, TRB: The Reconciled Body, and the author of "God Bless Our Divided America." He can be reached at [www.davidw-marshallauthor.com](http://www.davidw-marshallauthor.com)

## Biden offers new plan after Supreme Court halts student debt cancellation

From page 3

the Center for Responsible Lending added, "We urge President Biden to explore all his options, including using his executive and statutory authority, to provide student loan debt relief to the millions of Americans who will face increased financial insecurity when payments restart."

In response to the Supreme Court's June 30 rejection of student loan forgiveness, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona announced a three-pronged effort to mitigate student loan debt beginning this summer and before July 1, 2024 when new borrower regulations will take full effect.

"[T]he Department finalized our new income driven repayment plan, Saving on A Valuable Education (SAVE), which will be the most af-

fordable repayment plan in history," stated Secretary Cardona. "It will cut monthly payments to zero dollars for millions of low-income borrowers, save all other borrowers at least \$1,000 per year, and stop runaway interest that leaves borrowers owing more than their initial loan."

Borrowers who enroll in the plan and pay what they owe will no longer see their loans grow due to unpaid interest. An estimated 70 percent of borrowers who already were on income-driven repayment (IDR) before the payment pause are expected to see their payments on undergraduate loans cut in half, compared to other IDR plans. This will ensure that borrowers will not see their balance grow as long as they keep up with their required payments.

SAVE also provides adjustments for borrowers with varying family

status and incomes. For example, single borrowers earning less than \$15 an hour or \$32,805 annually will not have to make any payments. Borrowers with a family of four can earn up to \$67,500 and owe no payments. Married borrowers who file their taxes separately will no longer be required to include their spouse's income in their payment calculation for SAVE. These borrowers also will have their spouse excluded from their family size when calculating IDR payments, simplifying the choice of repayment plan for borrowers. And borrowers earning above these annual amounts would save more than \$1,000 a year on their payments compared to other IDR plans.

When the plan is fully implemented next July, additional benefits will begin and include:

Borrowers who have undergraduate and graduate loans

will pay a weighted average of between 5-10 percent of their income based upon the original principal balances of their loans. For example, a single undergraduate borrower making \$50,000 a year would see payments fall an additional \$72 a month, bringing their total reduction on the SAVE plan to \$163 a month;

Borrowers whose original principal balance was \$12,000 or less will receive forgiveness after 120 payments, the equivalent of 10 repayment years. An additional 12 payments will be added for each additional \$1,000 borrowed above that level, up to a maximum of 20 or 25 years; and

Borrowers in default will gain access to the existing income-based repayment (IBR) plan, allowing them to access lower payments and progress toward

forgiveness while they work to exit default. However, borrowers in default who provide income information that shows they would have had a \$0 payment at the time of default will be automatically moved to good standing, allowing them to access the SAVE plan.

Full details of the SAVE plan are available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/reg/hearulemaking/2021/idrfact-sheetfinal.pdf>.

An old adage teaches us that where there's a will, there's also a way. Many hope that this alternative loan forgiveness program will relieve the nation of its unsustainable debt.

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## Africans making headway in the ranks of popular sports



(GIN) –

He'll be playing basketball in Texas, he's got a wicked grin, and he's got a name almost as long as he is tall.

If you guessed Victor Wembanyama, give yourself a star. He's the most hotly anticipated basketball prospect in a generation as the U.S. searches for the next Hakeem Olajuwon or at least an up-and-coming NBA-level talent.

This week, the San Antonio Spurs selected Wembanyama No. 1 overall in the N.B.A. draft at Barclays Center in Brooklyn.

"One of the best feelings of my life," the Parisian-born teenager known as 'Wemby' said. "Probably the best night of my life. I've been dreaming about this for so long. It's a dream come true. It's incredible."

Spurs Coach Gregg Popovich was thrilled but tamped down excessive expectations. "He's not LeBron, or Tim, or Kobe, or anyone else," Popovich told reporters. "He's Victor."

Even as the civil rights movement began integrating African-American athletes into American sports, there was a delay in the integration of African-born athletes into American sporting events, notes Jonah Samples writing for the DePaul Journal of Sports Law in his piece "Making It

Rain Down in Africa—The Increase in African-Born Athletes in American Basketball Leagues and the Uncertain Future of the Industry."

The first NFL player born in Africa, Howard Simon Mwikuta, did not play until 1970. The Zambian's career was short lived and he only appeared in one game with the Dallas Cowboys before being released from his professional team.

Major League Baseball did not see its first African-born player until Gift Ngoepe of South Africa in 2017. Major professional sports organizations like the National Football League and Major League Baseball are still growing their numbers of African-born prospects.

At the start of the 2022-2023 season, NBA rosters included 16 players born in Africa, including Bismack Biyongo of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Josel Embiid, Pascal Siakam and Christian Koloko from Cameroon, Serge Ibaka of the Republic of Congo, Gorgui Dieng of Senegal, Wenyen Gabriel and Bol Bol of Sudan. Also, Mamadi Diakite of Guinea, Josh Okogie Udoka and Azubuike Okechukwu of Nigeria, and Bruno Fernando of Angola.

Compare that to Canada in the same season which produced the most foreign NBA players with 61. France produced 42 players,

and Serbia produced 30. Oceania and Australia produced 33 players while New Zealand produced 3 players.

Figures show there are over 500 African soccer players in European leagues. The number of players playing abroad is far higher if other non-European leagues, like the Middle East and China, are factored in.

Now, African-born athletes competing in the U.S. are beginning to thrive. Nine of the top 100 collegiate prospects for the NBA from 2011-2013 were from Africa and their success has turned the historically ethnocentric focus of American scouts and coaches away from the tradition of recruiting only American athletes, and towards recruiting basketball players from Africa.

Still, the sport has not been able to erase the vestiges of white supremacy and racism. In January, an effigy of Black soccer star Vinicius Jr., a 22-year-old Brazilian who plays for Real Madrid was hung from a highway bridge in Madrid prior to the match.

In Italy, monkey chants swirled around the stadium in April as a Black player celebrated a goal. In England, where a banana peel thrown from a hostile crowd during a game in north London landed at the feet of a Black player after he scored a penalty.

Racism is a decades-old issue in soccer, predominantly in Europe but seen all around the world.

Vinicius is emerging as the leading Black voice in the fight against racism, which continues to stain the world's most popular sport.

"I have a purpose in life," he said on social media, "and if I have to keep suffering so that future generations won't have to go through these types of situations, I'm ready and prepared." w/pix of 'Wemby' with Scoot Henderson

## Senegalese president slapped with criminal complaint from opponent

(GIN) –

A 170-page complaint has been filed against Senegalese president Macky Sall for "crimes against humanity."

The charge filed in France comes from Ousmane Sonko, Sall's main political opponent. The crimes were allegedly committed between March 2021 and June 2023.

Juan Branco, Senegalese opposition leader Sonko's lawyer detailed the claims:

"For the past month we have been conducting a lengthy investigation with the participation of hundreds of Senegalese, whom I would like to thank, French lawyer Branco said.

"Citizens, civil servants, people working in all of the country's administrations have provided us with evidence, documents, contracts, videos, testimonies, that have enabled us to establish the existence of 60 crimes of murder considered to be crimes against humanity."

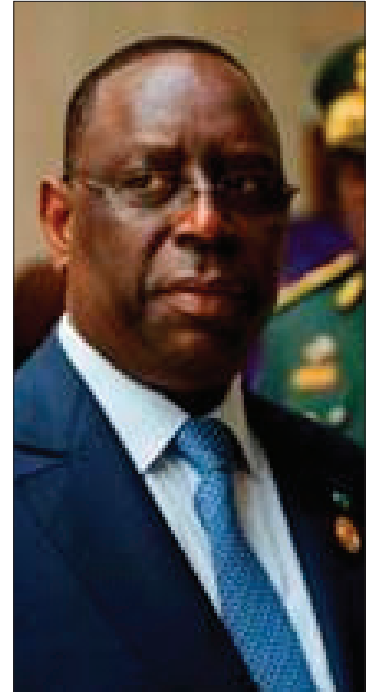
During the press conference, videos and photos were projected, some of them containing distressing footage, appearing to show Senegalese demonstrators getting killed or seriously injured during the deadly unrest earlier in June.

While the government's toll for June is 16 dead, Amnesty International has counted 23 fatalities and the opposition tally stands at 30.

According to Sonko, the deadly clashes followed his sentencing to jail time for "corrupting the youth" and represent "a generalized and systematic attack on the civilian population" of Senegal since March 2021.

The deadly protest this month following the court's verdict is the worst Senegal has seen in years.

In addition to the President,



Sonko's case targets Senegal's Interior Minister Antoine Diome, military police chief Moussa Fall and 112 others.

The criminal complaint has been filed with the Paris tribunal's crimes against humanity unit.

Sonko has also requested an investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Tension is high in Senegal which will hold a presidential election in 2024.

Sonko said he intends to be a candidate in next year's polls, however his conviction could prevent him from running.

President Macky Sall, who rode to power in 2012 on a wave of anger over his predecessor Abdoulaye Wade's efforts to seek a third term in office — has refused to rule out a similar move.

Sall has dismissed the legal complaint, calling it "ridiculous." w/pix of M. Sall

## Ugandan children targeted in attack by known terror group

(GIN) –

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni is struggling to defend his security forces that failed to block an attack on a secondary school where some 39 students were brutally murdered and others were abducted.

Museveni, who is also the commander in chief of armed forces, ordered the chief of defense forces to rush to Kasese district after the surprise attack by a known rebel group that escaped to the Democratic Republic of Congo across the border.

In November last year, Museveni praised his troops saying they had obliterated all threats by the ADF (Allied Democratic Forces), described as an Islamist militant group, to carry out attacks on

Uganda.

The Friday night attack in Kasese comes days after U.S. citizens were warned against visiting or living in Uganda, warning of imminent terror attacks.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Henry Okello Oryem, reportedly laughed off the US travel warnings, saying Uganda had the capacity to deal with any security threat.

The horrific attack on the secondary school recalled terror attacks in Kampala in 2021 when the UK issued a warning for its citizens but Uganda security said they were more than ready to counter insecurity incidents.

The assailants reportedly burned the school's library, plundered a food store and kidnapped six students to carry the

stolen loot.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) condemned the attack on the Mpondwe Lhubiriha school that took place on June 16 — coincidentally celebrated as the Day of the African Child. "We stand in solidarity with the students, the teaching staff, the school authorities, families of those impacted and the people of Uganda in this sad moment," said Munir Safiieldin, Unicef's representative to Uganda.

"Schools are a safe place for all learners and must never be attacked."

Friday's attack, said Richard Moncrieff of the International Crisis Group, said that despite nearly two years of concentrated joint operations against the group, it still has significant capacity. "This



attack shows that a wider strategy is needed than purely military.

President Museveni reportedly receives billions of dollars in development and military assistance from Western countries, including the U.N.

Gun violence has become a national topic of discussion, say Ugandan reporters with The Observer, despite the focus by the President's office on the LGBTQ community which is under attack.

Last month, 54 Ugandan soldiers were killed and scores injured when al-Shabaab militants attacked their base in Somalia.

Surviving soldiers said their troops mistook al-Shabaab militants for Somali farmers.

Museveni's critics have been detained and in some cases tortured as reportedly occurred in the case of Kakwenza Rukirabashaija, author of "Greedy Barbarian", a children's book, and activist Stella Nyanzi, under the Computer Misuse Act which prohibited the use of electronic communication to "disturb the peace, quiet or right of privacy of any person with no purpose of legitimate communication."

Both critics are said to be in exile at this time.

# On the scene

## "Rock & Roll Man," the life of Alan Freed

By Audrey J. Bernard

A new hit musical, "Rock & Roll Man" comes to town starring Tony Award nominee Constantine Maroulis and Emmy Award-winner Joe Pantoliano, onstage at the New York premiere Off-Broadway at New World Stages, Stage 3, 340 West 50th Street, NYC, Wednesday, June 21, 2023. Mayor Adams liked what he saw and gave the play an "Adam's Apple." The new musical, which opened June 21 and began previews June 3, celebrates the life of the trailblazing DJ Alan Freed, has now been extended through November 5, 2023 due to popular demand! The biomusical centers around the legendary music maestro who started a music movement in the 1950s that gave birth to the music genre "Rock & Roll." Freed is credited with bringing music to the people mixing artists and audiences on the airwaves and in concerts for the first time in history. He started a contemporary music awareness integrating the artist and the listening audience. For the first time in history, Black and white artists performed together on stage, for multi-racial audiences. Freed risked everything to integrate the airwaves and unite audiences across America through their love of music. The Cleveland DJ made history and



Constantine Maroulis, Rose Caiola, Gary Kupper



Rose Caiola and the cast of ROCK & ROLL MAN

became a living legend for young people. Chuck Berry is considered the father of Rock and Roll. He is considered by many historians to have been the first artist to put the Rock and Roll sound together.

"Rock & Roll Man" features classics created by legends such as Little Richard, Chuck Berry, LaVern Baker, Buddy Holly, Bo Diddley, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Drifters, The Coasters, and The Platters, including genre-defying hits like "Tutti Frutti," "Maybellene," "Great Balls of Fire," "Yakety Yak," and "Why Do Fools Fall in Love," along with original songs by Gary Kupper.

Freed's passion for music inspired the generation that changed society forever. Leading the cast is Broadway Rock of Ages star Constantine Maroulis, starring as Freed alongside Joe Pantoliano as Leo Mintz and Morris Levy, Bob Ari as J. Edgar Hoover, Rodrick Covington as Little Richard, Valisia LeKae as LaVern Baker, Jamonté as Dave Cooper and Frankie Lyman, Andy Christopher as Buddy Holly and Pat Boone, Autumn Guzzardi as Alan's Mother and Jackie, Anna Hertel as Alana and Betty, Matthew S. Morgan as Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Chuck Berry, Dominique Scott

as Jerry Lee Lewis and Dick Clark, and Eric B. Turner as Judge and Bo Diddley. Also in the ensemble are Natalie Kaye Clater, Lawrence Dandridge, and AJ Davis, with the company rounded out by understudies and swings Joe Barbara, Chase Peacock, and Bronwyn Tarboton.

Randal Myler directs, with Stephanie Klemons choreographing. Dave Keyes is music director, with Keyes and Kupper serving as music supervisors and arrangers. Kenny Seymour provides dance arrangements, additional orchestrations, and synth programming. Scenic design is by Timothy R.

Mackabee, with costume design by Leon Dobkowski, projection design by Christopher Ash, lighting design by Matthew Richards and Aja M. Jackson, sound design by Ed Chapman, and hair, wig and make-up design by Kelley Jordan. Casting is by JZ Casting. The Off-Broadway premiere is being produced by Caiola Productions and Benedetti Productions, Maria Caiola, Colleen Freed, Jay & Cindy Gutterman, and MTTM Theatrics. JRJ Productions' Jessica R. Jenen is executive producer and general manager. (Photos by Jennifer Broski) Visit [RockAndRollManTheMusical.com](http://RockAndRollManTheMusical.com).



Joy Behar, Rose Caiola



Constantine Maroulis stars as DJ Alan Freed



Jessica R. Jenen, Rose Caiola



Rose Caiola, Tracey Collins



Lance Freed, Rose Caiola



Rodrick Covington, Joe Pantoliano, Valisia LeKae, Constantine Maroulis



Rodrick Covington, Stephanie Klemons, Joe Pantoliano, Randal Myler, Valisia LeKae, Constantine Maroulis, Rose Caiola, Gary Kupper, Bob Ari, Dave Keyes, Larry Marshak



Jay Gutterman, Cindy Gutterman, Randal Myler, Rose Caiola, Catherine Curtin



# On the scene

## Tom Cruise's 'Mission: Impossible-Dead Reckoning Part One' — Your final 'Mission' is to accept it!

By Audrey J. Bernard

Paramount Pictures and Skydance Present A Tom Cruise Production "Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One," directed by Christopher McQuarrie and starring Tom Cruise returning in another adrenaline-fueled thriller. The movie is a visual feast with Cruise defying more impossible feats. His co-stars are just as enthralling and together they meet all expectations of giving the fans another magical memorable movie experience. Cruise is reel extra in 'Dead Reckoning' and his stunning death-defying stunts are exhilarating! Your mission -- if you agree to accept it -- is to see this movie!

**SYNOPSIS:** In "Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One," Ethan Hunt (Cruise) and his IMF team embark on their most dangerous mission yet: To track down a terrifying new weapon that threatens all of humanity before it falls into the wrong hands. With control of the future and the fate of the world at stake, and dark forces from Ethan's past closing in, a deadly race around the globe begins. Confronted by a mysteri-



ous, all-powerful enemy, Ethan is forced to consider that nothing can matter more than his mission – not even the lives of those he cares about most.

**CAST:** In addition to

Cruise, "Mission: Impossible–Dead Reckoning Part One" will also see the return of Ving Rhames as Luther Stickell, Henry Czerny as Eugene Kittridge, Simon Pegg as Benji Dunn, Rebecca Ferguson as

Ilsa Faust, Vanessa Kirby as Alanna Mitsopolis, and Frederick Schmidt as Zola Mitsopolis. Hayley Atwell (Captain America: The First Avenger) will be playing a new character called Grace.

The film also stars Esai Morales, Pom Klementieff, Mariela Garriga, Henry Czerny, Shea Whigham, Greg Tarzan Davis, Charles Parnell, Frederick Schmidt, Cary Elwes, Mark Gatiss, Indira Varma, and Rob Delaney.

**CREATIVES:** Directed by Christopher McQuarrie. Written by Christopher McQuarrie & Erik Jendresen. Based on the Television Series Created by Bruce Geller. Produced by Tom Cruise, Christopher McQuarrie. Executive Producers David Ellison, Dana Goldberg, Don Granger, Tommy Gormley, Chris Brock, Susan E. Novick

**PREMIERE:** The New York City premiere was off the hook! Paramount turned beautiful Rose Theater at Jazz at Lincoln Center into a possible mission for Cruise and his cast members who walked the red carpet with big smiles because they knew they landed the new movie! Cruise was joined by co-stars Hayley Atwell, Simon Pegg, Rebecca Ferguson, Vanessa Kirby, Esai Morales, Pom Klementieff, Mariela Garriga, Henry Czerny, Shea Whigham, Greg Tarzan Davis, and Cary Elwes. The movie was released in theaters on July 12, 2023. (Photos by Just Jared)



# Culture

## Diana Ross' The Music Legacy Tour with stunning arrangements is a visual feast for the naked eye!

By Audrey J. Bernard

On Thursday, June 29, 2023, Diana Ross brought her star power to iconic Radio City Music Hall for the east coast leg of The Music Legacy Tour. Some 6,000 screaming fans jumped from their seats when they heard her signature introduction music — “I’m Coming Out” — and she sauntered across the stage to start her highly anticipated 2 ½ hour show filled with unbelievable amazement. She looked beautiful and was a visual feast to the naked eye! At 79, she is still boss of the concert circuit offering up a showstopping performance defying any age limitations! Her refined stage presence is a testament to the fact that she still reigns supreme as “Female Entertainer of the Century.” Ross WOWED the audience with her magical musical prowess performing a plethora of memorable tunes including her hit song “Ain’t No Mountain High,” along

with classics by The Supremes including “Love Child,” “Reflections,” “You Can’t Hurry Love,” and “Come See About Me.” Then she performed several songs from The Wiz including “Ease on Down the Road” and “Home.” When not slaying her songs in dazzling designer’s gowns, she interacted with the audience about her life and legacy. Hence why she called the concert The Music Legacy Tour that included mellow music from Lady Sings the Blues — “Fine and Mellow,” “Don’t Explain” and “God Bless the Child” — which garnered an Oscar nomination for her iconic performance as Billie Holiday.

Then Ross eloquently discussed the making of her 2021 album Thank You, opening up about the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic. She told the crowd, “I thought, ‘If I can’t get on the road — if you’re gonna stop me from going on the road and saying hello to you and visiting — then maybe I can go in

the studio and record some new songs.” They gave her a raucous standing ovation showing endless love and appreciation for all she does to stay connected with her fans. Ross ended her show thanking her fans and offered some inspiring parting words. “We made this new album and the album is really dedicated to each and every one of you. It is about gratitude,” Ross said. “The title of the album is Thank You. For me, I got a chance to really look at what is important in my life, and I noticed I needed very little to be happy: I just needed to be with you, I needed to make sure I was in good health. We all were in the same place thinking about our futures.” She then sang Thank You and the crowd went crazy, again! Whenever you hear Diana Ross in concert near you, run and get your ticket and experience the performance of a lifetime. Thank You, Diana Ross, for the memories.



Diana Ross 'Thank you' Album Cover

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## Tracy Chapman breaks country music barriers with No. 1 hit

**The ascent to No. 1 makes Chapman the first Black woman to reach that plateau as the sole writer on a country music song since the chart's inception in 1990.**

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire

**R**enowned singer and songwriter Tracy Chapman, known for her reclusive nature, has emerged from the shadows to comment on a historic moment.

In a statement to Billboard, Chapman expressed her surprise and gratitude at finding herself on the country music charts, a genre she never expected to venture into.

"I'm honored to be there," she remarked, acknowledging country star Luke Combs and his resounding success with his cover of her iconic 1988 single, "Fast Car."

Combs' rendition of "Fast Car" has soared to the top spot on the Country Airplay chart, a significant achievement that carries even greater weight.

The ascent to No. 1 makes Chapman the first Black woman to reach that plateau as the sole writer on a country music song since the chart's inception in 1990.

Chapman's songwriting prowess also has propelled her to the summit of Billboard's Country Songwriters chart, courtesy of the Combs remake.

Combs' version has climbed higher in the charts than Chapman's original, which reached No. 6 upon its release over three decades ago.

"Fast Car," the breakout single from Chapman's eponymous 1988 debut album, earned her numerous accolades, including a Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance.

Billboard noted that, "Combs' version has generated at least \$500,000 in global publishing roy-

alties, Billboard estimates, with the bulk going to Chapman who owns both the writers' and publisher's share of the song."

Additionally, the success of Combs' version has boosted Chapman's original, with weekly consumption of Chapman's version increasing 44% since Combs' version was released, according to Luminate.

The original version garnered nominations for Record of the Year and Song of the Year, solidifying Chapman's status as a bona fide star in the music industry.

She also won Best New Artist and Best Contemporary Folk Album.

Chapman's journey to musical success began in Boston, where she honed her craft as a songwriter and performer, recording songs at the local WMFO radio station.

The turning point came in 1986, when a fortuitous introduction to a manager at Elektra Records led to her self-titled debut album, "Tracy Chapman," released in 1988.

The album's lead single, "Fast Car," achieved considerable acclaim, reaching No. 5 on the U.K. charts and No. 6 on the U.S. charts.

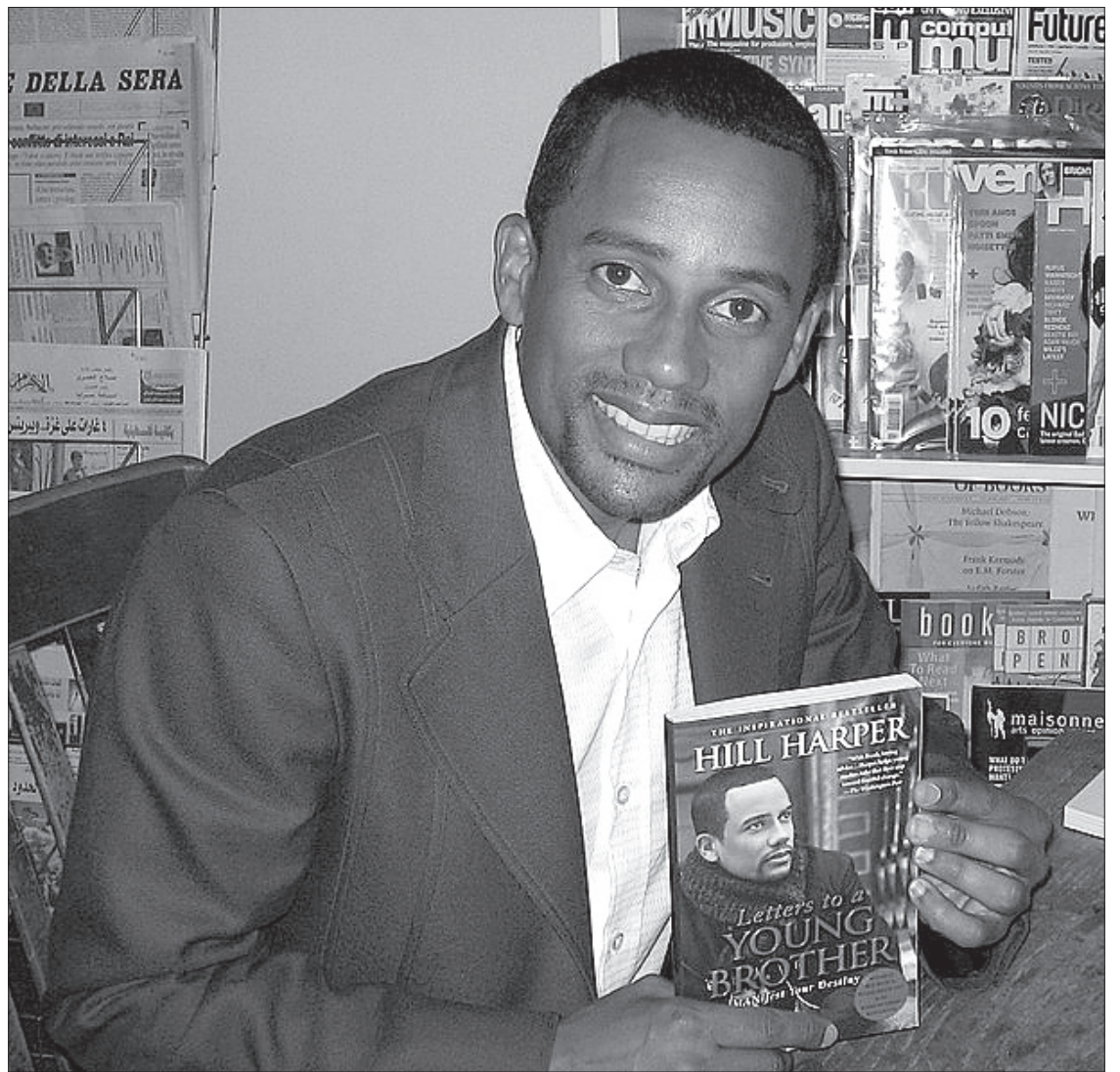
Another critically acclaimed album by Chapman, "New Beginning," came out in 1995 and featured the hit song "Give Me One Reason."

Today, Chapman remains an active artist and dedicated activist, lending her voice and performances to various organizations.

Extraordinary achievements, including Grammy recognition, chart-topping hits, and a dedicated fan base, have marked her musical journey.

Beyond her artistic endeavors, Chapman has used her platform to champion causes close to her heart, advocating for organizations like the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and Circle of Life.

In a memorable collaboration with Bonnie Raitt during a 2003 event, Chapman showcased her talent and commitment to making a positive impact.



## Acclaimed actor Hill Harper seeking U.S. Senate seat

**Harper's bid for the Democratic nomination sets him on a direct collision course with U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin.**

By Stacy M. Brown  
NNPA Newswire

**H**ill Harper, the well-known actor recognized for his roles in hit television shows such as "CSI: NY" and "The Good Doctor," has declared his candidacy for Michigan's vacant U.S. Senate seat.

Harper's bid for the Democratic nomination sets him on a direct collision course with U.S. Rep. Elissa Slotkin.

With Harper's entry into the race, he becomes the sixth Democratic contender vying for the seat left open by retiring Democratic Sen. Debbie Stabenow.

A four-term senator, Stabenow announced her decision not to seek re-election in 2024, adding to the significance of the battleground state's upcoming election.

Although born in Iowa, Harper has established strong ties to Michigan.

He owns a residence in Detroit and made a notable investment in the city's business landscape by purchasing Roasting Plant Coffee in 2017.

Before pursuing an acting career, Harper attended Brown Uni-

versity and Harvard Law School.

His extensive acting portfolio includes a nine-season run on the CBS show "CSI: NY" and a current role on ABC's "The Good Doctor."

Harper's involvement in public service extends beyond the entertainment industry.

In 2012, President Barack Obama appointed Harper to his cancer panel because of his personal experience as a cancer survivor.

Harper's background as a small-business owner, union member, and activist positions him as a unique candidate who emphasizes his status as a non-career politician.

He declared that his campaign would be "powered by the people, for the people," hoping that this trait would give him an advantage in Congress.

In an interview with The Associated Press leading up to his announcement, Harper stressed the importance of representing the people rather than focusing on party lines.

He said he believed Michigan residents desired an independent voice in the U.S. Senate.

Harper faces the daunting challenge of catching up to Slotkin's impressive fundraising efforts and established campaign.

Slotkin, who has garnered endorsements from fellow U.S. Rep. Haley Stevens, has raised \$5.8 million in just over four months, with

\$3.6 million remaining unspent.

Initially, many prominent Democratic candidates considering a Senate run chose not to compete after Slotkin's announcement in February.

However, in recent months, the field of Democratic candidates has expanded.

State Board of Education member Pamela Pugh, former Detroit state Rep. Leslie Love, businessman Nasser Beydoun, and attorney Zack Burns have all thrown their hats into the ring.

Michigan holds significant importance for the Democratic Party, as the state represents a must-win for maintaining control of the Senate.

Democrats anticipate tough races in other battleground states like Ohio, West Virginia, Montana, Nevada, and Pennsylvania.

In the 2020 election, Republican John James narrowly lost to incumbent Democratic Sen. Gary Peters, who now serves as a U.S. representative.

While two GOP candidates, including state Board of Education member Nikki Snyder, have declared their intentions to run, Republicans have yet to field a high-profile contender for the seat.

Notable figures like former U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer are reportedly considering bids.

Republicans have been successful in only one of Michigan's last 15 Senate races, securing an



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# A First...

## Kool & the Gang receives star in Youngstown, Ohio

Posted By Don Thomas

**A** celebration of good times and great honors happened on Saturday, July 1st, 2023, for Grammy Legends Kool & the Gang as the city of Youngstown Ohio unveiled the very first star saluting the funk greats on the Walk of Fame. Robert "Kool" Bell, the band's o-founder and his younger brother the late Ronald Khalis Bayyan Bell are Youngstown natives who moved to New Jersey in 1960. The Bell brothers formed their first band, the Jazziacs, four years later – which later became Kool & the Gang in 1968.

Robert attended the unveiling of the star with current members of Kool & the Gang as well as family. "We got our first star here, and we're hoping the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is next," Bell shared in an interview with WFMJ-TV. "It's just good to be back. It's just



The Gang pose with Walk of Fame star

good to see so many people and see family here. I have so many memories here."

Later that day, Kool & the Gang gave a homecoming concert in Youngstown. "It was definitely a party that night," said Bell. "We played all our hits for our hometown friends!" The Gang's new album, *People Want To Have Fun*, will be available on July 14th, 2023, for streaming as well as download, CD and vinyl purchase.

### More From Robert Kool Bell

The Kool Kids Foundation, the Bell family non-profit initiative supporting music education for youth, held their 4th Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser on Tuesday, July 11th, 2023 at the Cedar Hill Golf and Country Club, 100 Walnut Street in Livingston, New Jersey. For more information, go to [www.koolkidsfoundation.org](http://www.koolkidsfoundation.org)



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